



## OFFICES OF THE GOVERNORS

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March 29, 2004

Mr. Stephen J. Wright  
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Bonneville Power Administration  
P.O. Box 3621  
Portland, OR 97208-3621

Brigadier General William T. Grisoli  
Commander and Division Engineer  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Northwestern Division  
P.O. Box 2870  
Portland, OR 97208-2870

Dear Administrator Wright and Brigadier General Grisoli:

Thank you for your recent letter to the four Northwest Governors regarding summer spill operations on the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) mainstem projects.

One of our key objectives is to improve the economies of our states without lowering standards to protect the environment. Finding cost-effective ways to operate the FCRPS without sacrificing salmon and steelhead populations is a goal that is consistent with this objective. This is also consistent with the March 12, 2004 letter from members of Congress that concluded “[m]itigation actions should assure salmon runs are left in an equal or better condition than exists today.” We understand increased revenue through spill reduction could be used to reduce or avoid future electricity rate increases. This would have important economic benefits for our states and the region.

We strongly believe that the evaluation of spill reduction alternatives should be implemented in a manner consistent with the 2000 FCRPS Biological Opinion, our continued commitment to pursue a proactive fish and wildlife recovery strategy pursuant to the *Four Governors’ Recommendations*, and the 2003 mainstem amendments to the Fish and Wildlife Program of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. Combining these approaches will provide the best opportunity to develop long-term FCRPS operations management strategies that effectively balance economic and environmental needs.

Ultimately, the responsible federal agencies must decide whether any alternative spill regime avoids adversely affecting salmon and steelhead listed under the Endangered Species Act. In light of the considerations outlined in this letter, we will support a spill reduction proposal that mitigates for the impacts to nonlisted salmon and steelhead, and that NOAA Fisheries determines is adequate to avoid adversely affecting listed salmon and steelhead.

**Mr. Stephen J. Wright**  
**Brigadier General William T. Grisoli**  
**March 29, 2004**  
**Page 2**

We appreciate your interest in seeking input from our states and others on your ideas to reduce summer spill while mitigating its effect on salmon and steelhead. We understand you have received comments on the technical and biological merits of the potential offsets you are considering. Some of those comments were jointly and individually submitted by fish managers from tribal agencies, and the fish and wildlife agencies of the four Northwest states.

Our offices have worked closely with state agencies to provide feedback to you on your spill alternative ideas. Our state agencies, including the fish and wildlife departments, support the policy objectives referenced in this letter. Our staffs, state agency representatives, and Northwest Power and Conservation Council members and staff have had numerous discussions with your staff to explore different spill reduction and offset scenarios. Examples of ideas in which we have expressed interest include ensuring adequate monitoring, evaluation and reporting for any spill alternative and its offsets, accelerating and expanding implementation of testing of removable spillway weirs, and studying the effects of transportation on salmonid survival.

Our goal is to work collaboratively to develop long-term solutions to the systemic problems with current operation of the FCRPS. We continue to support implementing the Council's 2003 mainstem amendments, including dam and reservoir operations, as fundamental to achieving this goal. In all cases, our comments on summer spill reduction have been guided by the policy objectives discussed above and in our July 2000 and June 2003 *Recommendations*. We offer these comments as you consider your options on how to best move forward.

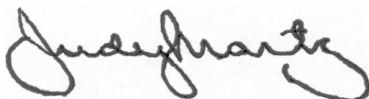
Sincerely,



**DIRK KEMPTHORNE**  
Governor of Idaho



**GARY LOCKE**  
Governor of Washington



**JUDY MARTZ**  
Governor of Montana



**THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI**  
Governor of Oregon

**Mr. Stephen J. Wright**  
**Brigadier General William T. Grisoli**  
**March 29, 2004**  
**Page 3**

cc: Mr. James L. Connaughton  
Chairman, Council on Environmental Quality

Mr. Rodney W. Sando  
Executive Director, Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority

Mr. David Allen  
Regional Director, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mr. D. Robert Lohn  
Regional Administrator, NOAA Fisheries

Mr. J. William McDonald  
Regional Director, U. S. Bureau of Reclamation